

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

University of Montana News Releases, 1928,
1956-present

University Relations

4-16-2008

Storyteller to perform traditional Japanese comedy

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Storyteller to perform traditional Japanese comedy" (2008). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 20952.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/20952>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Relations at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.



The University of
Montana

UNIVERSITY RELATIONS • MISSOULA, MT 59812 • 406-243-2522 • FAX: 406-243-4520

NEWS RELEASE

April 16, 2008

Contact: Christopher Marlow, program coordinator, UM Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center, 406-243-2988, christopher.marlow@mso.umt.edu.

STORYTELLER TO PERFORM TRADITIONAL JAPANESE COMEDY

MISSOULA—

Montanans will get a glimpse of a traditional Japanese comedic storytelling technique called rakugo-ka at a special program—performed in English—on The University of Montana campus Tuesday, April 29.

Katsura Kaishi, who the Japanese government designated as a “cultural ambassador,” will perform the traditional Japanese form of entertainment beginning at 7 p.m. in the University Center’s North Ballroom.

The event is free and open to the public.

The UM performance of rakugo-ka will feature Kaishi sitting on a stage in traditional kimono relating a long and complicated comical story that reflects the rise of a merchant culture in Japan at the time of samurai dominance. Equipped only with a paper fan and a hand towel, Kaishi will act out all the characters of the story and narrate its events by changing the pitch and tone of his voice.

There are about 300 stories still performed as classic rakugo today, but because of language issues, few outside of Japan have been exposed to the art. That, though, has begun to change thanks to Kaishi.

A professional rakugo entertainer since 1994, Kaishi started performing rakugo in

English in 1997, following a lifelong ambition to bring his comedic form to foreign countries.

He was moved, he said, to "try to change foreigners' image of Japanese as 'economic animals' or 'workaholics' who do not understand jokes, by making them laugh at a unique, 400-year-old style of storytelling art."

While Kaishi has performed in several large U.S. cities, Missoula will be one of the first small venues to host him.

Made possible by the Japanese Consulate in Seattle, this event is sponsored by UM's Mansfield Center, with assistance from the University's Japanese studies program, International Student and Scholar Services, and Missoula's Friends of Japan.

For more information, call Christopher Marlow, Mansfield Center program coordinator, at 406-243-2988.

###

TW/az
Local, specialized western
041608mmmc